



News Release

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Step Right Up and Fight Big Tobacco **Annual Truth From Youth Advertising Contest Launches with Creepy Carnival Theme**

(Salt Lake City, UT) –Utah’s youth anti-tobacco advocacy group, the Phoenix Alliance, encourages youth to “Step Right Up” and fight Big Tobacco by entering the seventh annual Truth From Youth Anti-Tobacco Advertising Contest.

Carnivals are filled with games of chance, much like the scary “addiction game” Big Tobacco encourages teens to play. On the surface the games look easy. Many decide to play, sure they can win, and thinking they won’t get addicted.

“The addiction game is one game you can’t win, despite appearances,” said Phoenix Alliance youth leader Jon Speroni. “Most teens think they can quit whenever they want to, but Big Tobacco wants you to be a customer for life. They saturate cigarettes with over thousands of harmful chemicals, many of which are designed to enhance the addictive qualities of nicotine.”

“In contrast to tobacco, the Truth From Youth Contest offers real prizes and opportunities,” said Lena Dibble, media liaison with the TPCP. “The contest has always been a powerful education tool, and this year we hope to get even more youth involved in fighting misleading tobacco industry messages.”

Utah youth ages five to 18 may enter the Truth from Youth contest by creating anti-tobacco radio, TV or billboard ads. Entries are grouped in elementary, junior and senior high school categories with cash prizes of \$300 for first place, \$200 for second and \$100 for third. Contest deadline is March 22, 2004. Best of contest winners will receive \$400 and have the opportunity to help produce their ads, which will be aired in 2004. Last year’s contest yielded more than 5,000 entries from students statewide. The poster and materials for the 2003-2004 contest reflect the creepy carnival theme and will be distributed to schools statewide. The surreal poster displays an eerie carnival game, “Reach for the

Stars,” where participants throw darts at the myriad of stars in the background. The poster encourages youth to “Step right up and give it a shot!” and goads them with “Ready to try your luck?” The poster reads “Entering is easier than whackin’ a sleeping mole. A tip: the wilder you throw, the better,” encouraging youth to enter their more daring and wacky ideas.

“Big Tobacco spends \$11.22 billion yearly to lure people into a smoking addiction, because 440,000 of their current customers die every year in the U.S alone,” said Phoenix Alliance youth leader Jenny Frodsham. “They need to replace the customers who have died, and they go after teens because we have our whole lives ahead of us to spend money on cigarettes.”

“Smoking isn’t cool and it’s not worth the risk,” said Speroni. “Smoking will kill you, put those around you at risk due to secondhand smoke, and even your dating life will be affected because no one wants to kiss a smoker.”

For more information about the contest or the Phoenix Alliance call 1-801-256-4924 or visit the web site at www.youthagainsttobacco.com.

Editorial Note: Call Amanda Caraway at 801-531-0533 to set up interviews, or to acquire copies of the contest materials, corresponding carnival art, or copies of last year’s winning entries.

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